

Saw Palmetto (*Serenoa repens*), Berry Harvesting FAQs

1. Why is a permit required to harvest saw palmetto berries in Florida?

After receiving input from public and private landowners, conservation interests and other interested parties, the Endangered Plant Advisory Council unanimously recommended adding saw palmetto to the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' commercially exploited plant list as part of the [Regulated Plant Index](#). The recommendation was adopted by department rule, which resulted in new requirements for the harvesting of saw palmetto berries. These new requirements took effect July 17, 2018.

2. What formats can I use to send in my Permit Application? Can I take a picture of my Permit Application with my smart phone and email it?

- a) For the fastest turnaround please submit your application online here: [Native, Endangered, and Commercially Exploited Plant Application Portal \(fdacs.gov\)](#).
- b) Alternatively, you may either mail in a hard copy of your Permit Application to:
Division of Plant Industry – Permit Unit, P.O. Box 147100, Gainesville, FL 32614-7100,
- c) Or you may email a scanned copy to DPISPB@FDACS.gov.
- d) You may submit pictures of your Permit Application; however, the image and all information on the form must be clearly visible. Unclear or incomplete applications may not be processed. **Please note commonly accepted electronic file types include: .pdf, .jpeg, .png, .tif, .tiff. File types such as .heic or shared Google Drive file links cannot be opened.**

3. How long does it take to process a Permit Application and issue the permit?

The review process may take up to 14 business days depending on the information provided. Incomplete applications will delay the permit and possibly prevent you from receiving one. The permit cannot be issued until all required information is received.

4. Can I start harvesting prior to obtaining a permit?

No. You will need an issued permit from FDACS before harvesting.

5. Is there a fee associated with a Permit Application?

No. There is no cost associated with this permit application.

6. When can I submit a Permit Application?

Applications may be submitted anytime throughout the year. Harvesters are encouraged to submit their applications for a permit earlier in the year to avoid delays in processing time during peak harvest season.

7. What is needed to harvest saw palmetto berries in Florida?

All harvesters should carry a copy of their approved FDACS permit along with signed permissions of each landowner or legal representative of the property(ies) where harvesting will occur.

8. **How do I add additional properties to my issued permit? How do I know if the additional properties have been approved?**

ONLINE APPLICATIONS: For the fastest turnaround please submit your application online here: [Native, Endangered, and Commercially Exploited Plant Application Portal \(fdacs.gov\)](https://fdacs.gov).

- a) For tips on how to fill out an application with the online system download our [Online Application FAQ](#)

PAPER APPLICATIONS: You will need to complete an additional Permission Letter for Harvesting (found on page two of the Permit Application) for each additional property and include the exact name of the agency and/or person who applied along with your issued permit number. Once received and reviewed by FDACS, it will be added to your existing permit application and an updated permit will be emailed or physically mailed back to you.

Please Note: commonly accepted electronic file types include .pdf, .jpeg, .png, .tif, .tiff. File types such as .heic or shared Google Drive file links cannot be opened.

9. **Do I have to fill out a Permission Letter for Harvesting if I am harvesting from my own property?**

Yes, if you intend to harvest berries for commercial sale or use outside of your own property, a permit and written permission is **required**.

ONLINE APPLICATIONS:

If you are completing the application online, on **Step 4** you can check the box to indicate “I am harvesting from my own property, addressed on **Step 1**.” This will automatically fill out the form with your address information.

Please Note: if you own another property with a different address than what you listed on Step 1, or if the physical harvest location differs from your mailing address, **Do Not** check this box. Proceed to fill out the correct harvesting location address as requested on the form.

PAPER APPLICATIONS:

Please include a completed and signed page 2 Permission Letter for your property where harvesting will occur. If you own multiple properties, you can include multiple copies of the page 2 permission letter form, one for each unique harvesting location.

10. **Is there a limit to how many individuals can harvest under one permit?**

No, but all harvesters (except day workers reporting to a crew leader) must be listed on the Permit. Each harvester should carry a copy of the issued permit with them whenever handling the berries.

11. **What if you have more than one property that you are harvesting from?**

You must obtain permission from the landowner/legal representative of every property you harvest from. **For locations that do not have a physical street address, you must include either:**

- the Tax Parcel ID and county

- **OR the Section/Township/Range with a physical description of the location**
- **OR the GPS (latitude/longitude) coordinates with a physical description of the location.**

You can submit clear aerial maps or information from a local property appraiser's office as additional clarification of where harvesting will occur.

ONLINE APPLICATIONS:

Harvest location information is provided on Step 4. You can complete the form and click the button to "Add Another Location" at the bottom of the page. Repeat the process of filling out the form for each property where harvesting permission was granted.

PAPER APPLICATIONS:

Complete page 1 of the Permit and then complete the Permission Letter for Harvesting (found on page 2 of the Permit Application) for each property. If an owner has multiple properties that you will be harvesting from, then they must complete a Permission Letter for Harvesting for each property.

12. Is there a limit to the quantities of berries I can harvest?

No. There is no limit unless stipulated by the landowner or your issued permit.

13. How will I know if my Permit Application is approved?

If approved, your permit will be sent to you by email. If you did not include an email address on your Permit Application, the approved permit will be physically mailed to you.

14. How long is the harvesting permit valid and is it transferable?

The permit expires twelve (12) months after the date of issuance and is not transferable. All persons listed as harvesters on the permit should carry a copy of it and the written permissions anytime plants are handled.

15. How do I add another harvester to my approved permit?

ONLINE APPLICATIONS:

Every person granted permission to harvest Native Endangered or Commercially Exploited plants should be listed on a permit or have their own. If you have an additional person you would like to add to your permit as a harvester you can submit a request by clicking the "Add Additional Person" button in the upper-right hand corner of your permit application. Once approved, a new permit will be emailed to you and available for download under your "Documents".

PAPER APPLICATIONS:

Requests can be made by sending an updated page 1 of the paper form with the additional harvester(s) listed to DPISPB@FDACS.gov or Division of Plant Industry – Permit Unit, P.O. Box 147100, Gainesville, Florida 32614-7100

Alternatively, a list of additional harvesters may be submitted with reference to the primary permit holder's name and permit number.

If, however, the additional harvesters are day workers reporting to a crew leader and the crew leader is already listed on the permit, an updated list of harvesters is not necessary.

16. Can I renew my permit?

Only applications submitted online will have the option of completing a renewal process each year.

Permit holders will receive an automatic email notification 30 days prior to the expiration of their existing permit with a link to renew. During the renewal process, the application will pre-fill with the previous year's information and applicants will be required to reaffirm permission to harvest is still granted at each of the listed locations on the permit. Any changes to the name of approved harvesters, harvested plant information, or harvest location details may be submitted at this time.

NOTE: Submission of a renewal application does not automatically guarantee approval of the permit for the following year. If your permit has expired, you must wait until you receive your new permit before harvesting the berries can occur.

17. On the Paper Application page 2 Permission Letter for Harvesting, where it asks for the name of the person granted permission to harvest, what name do I write?

The name you list on that line must be the same as the name of the agency or person applying that is listed on page or step 1.

18. Can I list multiple properties on the Permission Letter for Harvesting?

No, each property should be submitted with individual permission letter (page 2 of the paper application) or individual location details (step 4 of the online application).

19. Why is there a page three on the Paper Permit Application, and do I need to submit it?

Page 3 is available for listing any additional plants you plan to harvest. If you are only harvesting one species of plant or plant part (for example, saw palmetto berry), page three is not needed.

20. Can I harvest on state, county, city, or public land?

Only if permission is granted by the proper authority (i.e., county, city, state, etc.) and submitted for approval on a Permit Application.

21. I received permission to harvest plants from another location. How do I add another property to my approved permit?

ONLINE APPLICATIONS:

If you received permission to harvest from another property, submit a request by clicking the "Add Additional Harvesting Location" button in the upper-right hand corner of your permit

application. Once approved, a new permit will be emailed to you and available for download under your “Documents”.

PAPER APPLICATIONS:


Complete an additional page 2 permission letter of the paper form. You may either mail in a signed hard copy of the form to Division of Plant Industry – Permit Unit, P.O. Box 147100, Gainesville, Florida 32614-7100 or email an electronic version to DPISPB@FDACS.gov.

Please Note: commonly accepted electronic file types include .pdf, .jpeg, .png, .tif, .tiff. File types such as .heic or shared Google Drive file links cannot be opened.

22. If I misplace my permit, can I get another copy?

ONLINE APPLICATIONS:

Login to your online account, open the application you would like to view, and click on “Documents” in the left-hand menu.

Your Permit along with any supplemental documents you uploaded during the application process should be listed under “Files”. Click on  to download a PDF copy.

PAPER APPLICATIONS:

Please contact us at 1-888-397-1517 or submit a request for a copy of your permit via email to DPISPB@FDACS.gov.

23. How do I use my permit?

You must always carry a copy of your permit along with signed permissions when harvesting or handling harvested saw palmetto berries.

24. Are buyers, transporters, or processors of saw palmetto berries required to have a permit?

Buyers, transporters, or processors are not required to have a permit, but they are required to have the following with them at all times:

- A bill of lading
- A copy of the harvester’s entire permit, including written permission letters for approved properties where harvesting occurred.

25. What documentation is needed for saw palmetto berries that were harvested in Florida to be transported out of state?

Any saw palmetto berries harvested in Florida are required to be transported with the following documents:

- A bill of lading
- A copy of the harvester’s permit
- Copy of the written permission granted for each harvested property

26. What is a bill of lading?

A bill of lading provides documentation of the following:

- Name and address of the shipper or consignor.

- Name and physical address of the receiver or consignee.
- Description of the agricultural goods in the shipment.
- Place and state or country of origin.
- Ultimate destination of the shipment if other than that of the receiver or consignee.

27. Is documentation needed for harvesting berries out of state if you will then be bringing them into Florida?

No. The Permit is only for harvesting in the state of Florida. However, as with any agricultural good, you will need to have a bill of lading or similar document to show where the berries were harvested.

28. When is saw palmetto berry harvesting season?

There is no official season. Harvest depends on where the plants are growing, the amount of local rainfall, and other environmental and market factors. Typically, the season lasts from August through November.

29. Who do I contact if I have additional questions or concerns?

For questions about saw palmetto berry harvesting, please contact us at 1-888-397-1517 or DPISPB@FDACS.gov.